

City of Fircrest

February 2019

Town Topics



CITY COUNCIL

Hunter T. George, Mayor
Denny Waltier, Mayor Pro Tempore
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Brett L. Wittner
Blake L. Surina
Jamie Nixon

Mayor's Message



After a couple of years of work, we have made a lot of progress on the development of a new pool and community center to replace the complex that opened in 1962. The decision on whether to build it is yours - and it's coming this spring.

The Fircrest City Council, acting on the recommendation of a steering committee of City residents, voted on January 8th to put a park bond on the April 23 ballot. If approved, the bond would provide up to \$13.5 million towards the \$18 million cost of a new pool and community center.

The remainder of the project cost would be covered by \$750,000 from the City of Fircrest, a \$750,000 grant from the Washington Legislature (for the pool portion of the project), and private philanthropy.

As I reported last month, we have already received a generous \$1 million commitment from the William and Joyce Edwards Foundation. We have since hired The Briggs Group, a professional fundraising firm with a proven track record of success, to help the city secure additional philanthropic donations. And we are asking for another grant from the Legislature, this time for the community center portion of the project. Everything the City brings in beyond the \$4.5 million

difference between the project cost and the bond reduces the amount of bond dollars needed.

We are working with bond counsel on the final structure of the project financing. As of this writing in January, a \$13.5 million bond would cost the owner of a \$400,000 home some where between \$272 and \$290 a year.

The project, which would be built in two phases, includes a new pool and bath house that includes a party room and restrooms that would also be available to Fircrest Park users throughout the year. The new community center would include a larger gym, a teen room, kitchen, and three multi-purpose rooms that could be used for meetings, classes, and more.

ARC Architects has produced a number of renderings that show various aspects of the pool and building. And our bond counsel continues to refine cost estimates. All of this information is available at www.cityoffircrest.net under the "Up-To-Date Info" link.

This may be the only item on the April 23rd ballot in Fircrest. I cannot use this column to advocate for or against the measure. I simply ask that you learn more about the project and exercise your civic right to vote.

Hunter T. George
Mayor



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City Manager's Corner



Hello Fircrest residents, for this edition of Town Topics, I have several updates to share regarding passports, construction projects in town, and property tax relief options.

Passports: As we reported in the December edition of Town Topics, the City of Fircrest has contracted to provide court services for the City of Ruston. This is a lot of work for our Municipal Court to take on so we are moving passport services from the court across the City Hall foyer to our Planning & Building window. For those of you who did not know, the City serves as a passport agency. With the switch from the Municipal Court to Planning & Building for passport services, the U.S. State Department required the switch to be approved by the federal government and new staff to be trained. We were unable to provide passport services in January as we worked through this process, but by the time this article goes out, we should be up and running again.

Construction Projects: There are several projects going on in town at various stages of development. Chick-fil-A has worked through the demolition process for its site on 19th Street across from Tacoma Community College. We have worked through utility development with the company, which is putting a construction team in place.

The Fircrest Golf Club condo project is progressing. The Club is working through the final site design process before getting into building permits.

At Town Center, you have likely noticed work being done to the old grocery store space. The property owner is completing some shell work in anticipation of establishing a dialysis center.

Sanitary Sewer Back Ups

Over the last few years, the City of Fircrest has been improving and upgrading the sanitary sewer pipes. However, the City and its residents still experience back ups in the sewer system. Sometimes the problem is in the residents side sewer or it can be found in the City's main line.

A recent article in the Tacoma News Tribune provided a discussion about flushable wipes, which are NOT good for your pipes or the City's. Most back ups are caused when the wrong items are flushed down the toilet. They can also be caused by FOG (fats, oils and grease) or a failing sewer line.

As soon as you notice any back up in your sewer system, contact the City of Fircrest Public Works department at 253-564-8900. A Public Works crew member will evaluate the City sewer main and try to determine where the problem is as well as provide guidance and assistance to keep the sewer system flowing.

Property Tax Relief: We've received various questions from residents regarding property tax relief options. Through Pierce County, there is an exemption program available for eligible seniors and disabled persons. This program is available to residents who are at least 61 years old or retired from regular gainful employment due to a disability, with an income of \$40,000 or less. Proof of income is required and proof of disability is required as applicable. The exemption freezes the value of the residence, exempts all excess levies, and may exempt a portion of regular levies.

There are also property tax deferral programs based on limited income or senior/disabled status. These differ from the exemption program in that they defer a portion of your tax liability until the property changes hands or is no longer used as your primary residence. At some point, however, the deferred taxes will come due. You can learn more about these programs online at www.co.pierce.wa.us/682/Property-Tax-Exemptions-Deferrals.

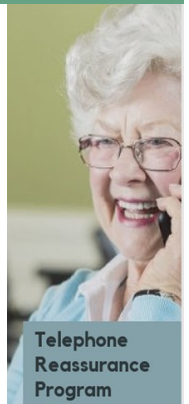
Ballot Box: As a reminder, thanks to the Pierce County Auditor's office, a ballot drop box is now located at Fircrest City Hall for voters to have a free, secure, and convenient way to vote.

We will put links to the senior citizen/disabled persons program and the tax deferral program under the Up-To-Date section at www.cityoffircrest.net.

Scott Pingel
City Manager

Telephone Reassurance Program

The Fircrest Police Telephone Reassurance Program is a way to promote security and peace of mind for "at-risk" older adults or disabled Fircrest residents and is free of charge. A staff member will call you once a week on a prearranged day to verify your well-being. If we cannot reach you, we will reach out to local contacts you've provided us with and request they check on you. If no one can be reached a Fircrest Officer will stop by your home and do a Welfare Check. Brochures are available at the Fircrest Police Department, City Hall and the Fircrest Community Center.



Reassurance calls are available weekly on either Monday or Friday between 2:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Applications are available on the City of Fircrest website at www.cityoffircrest.net, at Fircrest City Hall, and at the Fircrest Police Department.

Parks & Recreation Update

The City of Fircrest's Parks and Recreation Department maintains the community's park system of 26 acres including two multiuse parks that contain six competition size tennis courts, three outdoor basketball courts, seven soccer fields, two playgrounds, two bocce courts, four baseball fields, one swimming pool, a wading pool and a Community Center with gym, meeting rooms, restrooms, and offices. The Recreation Department uses these facilities to provide social, physical and personal recreation activities for all ages during their leisure time.

We will be installing a new irrigation system at the Whittier Park Soccer Fields early this year. The current system was installed in the late 70's and is needing frequent repairs and is no longer functioning efficiently. We have made some great changes to our Community Events line up for 2019. We will be moving our annual Fircrest Fun Days to July this year, so mark your calendars for July 19th & 20th. We are also working with the Whittier PTSA and the Fircrest Kiwanis on some preliminary plans for a spring fun run. We want to thank all of our volunteers, sponsors, and donors for a great year. The Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department takes great pride in serving our citizens.

Upcoming Events

Daddy Daughter Dance

February 15, 6:30—8:30 PM

Dads (*dad, grandpa, uncle or any other special person who fits the role*) and daughters enjoy an evening just for you! All ages welcome, refreshments and party favors provided.

2nd / 3rd Grade Basketball Tournament

March 1st & 2nd

Come out and play in our 2nd/3rd grade post season youth basketball tournament at the Fircrest Community Center. Teams will be guaranteed three games and we will award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place team trophies and individual T-shirts for championship team players. Contact Chris Wells for more information at 253-238-4161 or by email at cwells@cityoffircrest.net.

Fish N Fun

March 23rd

We will have a pool stocked with trout to be caught by kids 10 years & younger on Saturday, March 23. The times are 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (must have a ticket) and from 1:00 - 2:00 PM (open fish). Kids need to bring their own fishing poles. Tickets for fishing reservations will be available at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center beginning Saturday, March 2nd. This is a free event!

Easter Egg Hunt & Eggstravaganza

April 20, 10:00 AM

The Fircrest Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 20th at 10:00 AM. Fircrest Tot Lot for children 4 & under and at Fircrest Park for children ages 5-9. Join us at 9:00 AM at the Community Center for crafts, games, and refreshments before the event kicks off! Cost is free!

Spring Craft Fair

May 4th

Mother and Son Dance

May 10th

Go Hawaiian Pool Party

June 1st

Community Garage Sale

June 8th

Strawberry Feed

June 23rd

Classic Car Show

July 7th

Fun Days – Movie in the Park

July 19th & 20th

National Night Out

August 6th

Haunted Trails

October 24th

Pumpkin Patch

October 31st

Holiday Bazaar

November 16th & 17th

Tree Lighting Ceremony

December 1st

Recognizing our Parks Stewards

Thank you to the Pierce County District (PCD) for conducting two separate work parties on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. One was held at the Thelma Gilmur park and the other at Whittier park. The group at Whittier Park was led by Fircrest resident, and PCD Stewardship liaison Katie Baker. The work party at Thelma Gilmur park received help from the Washington Conservation Corps. Take a walk down one of these great nature trails and check them out yourself. If you are interested in volunteering, the Gilmer Grubbers meets the first Monday of the month at Thelma Gilmur park. Please visit the City's calendar for more information www.cityoffircrest.net.



Serving the community since 1925

Be Involved, Stay Involved, Get It From The Source, Let Your Voice Be Heard

City Council

Fircrest has been a non-charter code city operating under a Council-Manager form of government since 1990. The City Manager, appointed by the Council, carries out Council policies and administers the day-to-day operations of the City. Council is the policy-making body of the City. The seven members serve staggered four-year terms of office. Duties of the Council include enacting legislation, establishing basic policy for the City, and adopting the annual budget. The City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 PM and holds a study session the third Monday of each month at 6:00 PM at the City Hall, 115 Ramsdell Street. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. If you miss a meeting, the meeting materials and audio are available on our website.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission meets at City Hall on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM (except for the August meeting which is the third Tuesday). The Planning Commission is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council to do the following:

- Act as a research and fact-finding agency for the City, as requested or required by the City Council;
- May participate in the activities of regional planning commissions;
- Study, promulgate, develop and make recommendations on updates to the comprehensive plan;
- Process and hear all requests for zoning, rezoning or variances, grant or deny requests for variance, make reports and recommendations to the Council regarding any proposed plat or subdivision and recommend to the City Council changes in the City ordinance law relating to any of such matters.

Civil Service Commission

The Civil Service Commission meets at the City Hall on the first Monday of every month at 4:00 PM. Commission members are appointed by the City Manager with the approval of the majority of the City Council.

The Civil Service Commission, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 41.12 RCW, is created to exercise the powers and to perform the duties established by such state law in connection with the selection, appointment and employment of police in the City.

Councilmembers

Hunter T. George, Mayor
Denny Waltier, Mayor Pro Tempore
David M. Viafore
Shannon Reynolds
Brett L. Wittner
Blake L. Surina
Jamie Nixon

Commissioners

Karen Patjens, Chair
Kathy L. McVay, Vice-Chair
Cameron McGinnis
Sarah Hamel, P.E.
Karissa Carpenter

Commissioners

Joe Harrison, Chair
Alex Koerger, Chair Pro Tempore
Dominique' Jinhong

Check out our **Up To Date Information** webpage www.cityoffircrest.net/updates for the latest information, including current meeting agendas, minutes, resolutions, ordinances, and project updates.

Reporting A Problem

Nuisance and Code Compliance

- Overgrown weeds or garbage on private property
- Illegal construction
- Sign violations

Contact Planning and Building Department at 253-564-8902

Public Works

- Vegetation blocking sidewalks
- Intersection visibility
- Issues in the right-of-way
- Roadway or utility concerns
- Streetlight not working

Contact Public Works at 253-564-8900

Fircrest Police Department

- Illegal Parking
- Abandoned cars in the street
- Noise concerns
- Dangerous Animals

Crime in Progress: Call 911

Contact Police Department non-emergency at 253-798-4722

Animal Control

- Stray animals
- Dead animal in the street

Contact Tacoma Animal Control at 253-624-7387

Not finding your concern, feel free to contact City Hall at 253-564-8901 or visit our website at www.cityoffircrest.net